

LESSON 4C—NARRATIVE: WHAT COOKING METHODS DID ANCIENT PEOPLE USE?

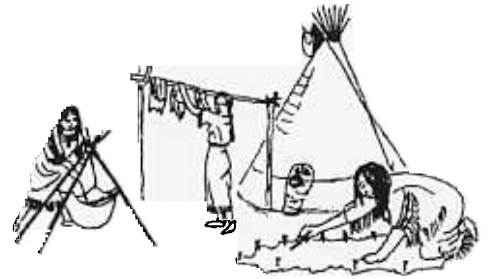
Prehistoric foods

Ancient people used excavated pits and hide containers to cook their food.

Once the stones were heated, they placed the pouch directly on the hot stones. Then they covered the pouch with earth or mulch, leaving the meat to cook for several hours, or even a day. They also cooked meat directly on large flat rocks heated in fire pits. In addition, they sometimes roasted meat on a spit directly over an open fire or **fire hearth**.

Prehistoric people created cooking containers from animal skins. They cooked roots, bulbs, plants, and meat inside these ancient pots. These hide cooking containers were never placed directly over a fire because they would burn. Instead, prehistoric cooks placed water inside the **hide container** and added hot stones, making the water boil. They then added foods to the boiling water. Archaeologists refer to this method of cooking as **stone-boiling**.

Ancient people also dried foods in the sun. Meats, plants, and berries could be cooked by solar energy. Photographs of Indian camps in the late 1800s show **drying racks** with hundreds of pieces of meat hanging over willow frames. Photographs also show women placing berries on animal hides to dry them in the sun. Sun drying preserved food for use at another time. It was an important way of storing food for the long winter months.



After butchering their meat, ancient people dried it in the sun to preserve it for future eating. They scraped animal hides for clothing and shelter, and they used hide containers as cooking pots for stone-boiling. *Courtesy Montana Historical Society.*

LESSON 4C—VOCABULARY: WHAT COOKING METHODS DID ANCIENT PEOPLE USE?

animal skin pouch _____

drying rack _____

excavated pits _____

fire drills _____

fire hearths _____

hide containers _____

stone-boiling _____

LESSON 4C—ARCH ACTIVITY: WHAT'S ON THE MENU?

Grades: 3–8

Time: 40 minutes

Content Area: science and writing

Who: small group

Materials:

pencils and paper

Arch Journal

"Foods I Eat" worksheet (attached)

OBJECTIVE AND OUTCOME

- Students will compare their modern diet with that of ancient Montanans.
- Students will record foods consumed for a day. They will devise a summer and winter menu for prehistoric Montanans and compare these menus with their own.

ACTIVITY

1. Read or summarize to the students the narratives for Lessons 4A and 4B on the kinds of plants and animals prehistoric people ate.

2. Divide students into four groups. Give each group a "Foods I Eat" Worksheet. Ask each group to select a writer and a presenter. Have each student tell the writer what they ate the previous day for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The writer puts this information on the "Foods I Eat" Worksheet.

3. Instruct each group to next devise two daily menus (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) for prehistoric hunters and gatherers living 1,000 years ago, one for summer and one for winter. Discuss differences in available foods with the changing seasons. The writer should write down the prehistoric menus for summer and for winter that his or her group comes up with.

4. Ask each group to present to the whole class their winter and summer menus for prehistoric hunters and gatherers. They should also discuss

and compare their group's typical menu today with that of people living 1,000 years ago.

5. Ask students to think about and discuss why we have such a varied diet compared to prehistoric people? What technology do we have that allows us this luxury (i.e. grocery stores, trucks to bring food from far away, refrigeration, etc.)?

EXTENSIONS

3-5:

- Research vocabulary.

See: Lesson 4C—Vocabulary.

- Illustrate a prehistoric menu. Draw food people would have eaten 1,000 years ago.

6-8:

- Ask students to calculate the number of calories for each meal they consumed the previous day. Have them estimate how many calories there would be in the prehistoric menu they created. Are there differences? What are they?

- Have class watch and discuss cooking methods in the video: *People of the Hearth*.

LESSON 4C—ARCH ACTIVITY: WHAT'S ON THE MENU?
FOODS I EAT WORKSHEET

FOODS I EAT

NAME	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER

Adapted from: *Discovering Archaeology in Arizona*